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1. The September 1951 shake-up within the Czech Communist Party was the climax of a long-standing disagreement on policy administration between two groups in the Czech CP hierarchy. One group was composed of the moderates, such as Gottwald, Zapotocky, Dolansky, Siroky and Nosek; the other clique made up of the more radical element, was led by Rudolf Slansky and included Frank, Geminder and Bares. Both factions were

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completely loyal to Moscow, and both saw as their ultimate goal the complete Sovietization of Czechoslovakia. The difference between the two groups lay in the methods they advocated to attain this goal. President Gottwald and his backers favored taking one step at a time, each time consolidating gains; they also had more regard for Czech institutions and the feelings of the people. Slansky and his radical followers favored a more rapid, ruthless pace; they were determined to complete the Sovietization process as quickly as possible, particularly with regard to agricultural collectivization. This met with bitter opposition and resentment on the part of the farmers. The more they were prodded, the less they produced; quotas weren't filled, and collectivization simply didn't work out. Shops could be shut down and forced out of business; this couldn't be done to the farmers. Nevertheless, Slansky and Co advocated a quick change-over, regardless of the economic hardships brought about as a result of their methods.

2. In 1948 Slansky was the man of the hour in Czechoslovakia, rivaling Geminder in popularity. This was true until October 1950 when Marie Svermova, at that time a deputy Secretary General of the Czech Communist Party, was arrested and charged with attempting a coup d'etat against Gottwald and Slansky. Slansky spoke at the meeting of the CP chairmanship in February 1951 and compared the Svermova and Sling cases. I have never thought that there was any relation between the two; Slansky's charges at the time were ridiculous. Later in 1951, Slansky acted as main spokesman of the Czech Communist Party at a meeting of the leaders of the Slovak CP. In the meantime, the purges had continued, embracing not only Svermova and Sling (District Communist Party Chairman for Brno), but also Clementis, (fnu) Fuchs (District CP Chairman for Moravska Ostrava), Polak (District Chairman for the CP in Bratislava, Lomsky (CP Chairman for Plzen), and the District CP Chairman in Usti nad Labem, whose name I cannot recall. The conflict between the Gottwald and Slansky factions grew apace. I do not believe, however, that anyone closely connected with Slansky was purged before September 1951.
3. The conflict between Slansky and Gottwald was sharpened by the September reorganization of the CP, and Slansky's subsequent demission. I believe Gottwald had succeeded in persuading Moscow that Slansky was of no further use. Gottwald had charged Slansky with negligence; one of his supporting arguments was the fact that Slansky had been Secretary General of the Czech CP when both Arthur London and Col Pavel were appointed. (The responsibility for appointments to important government positions rests ultimately with the CP Secretary General.) London (Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs) and Pavel (Deputy Minister of Interior) had been arrested in February or March 1951. Slansky's self-renunciation and "confession" shortly before his arrest were, of course, mandatory, but they may have been bona fide. Once one starts slipping from a position of prominence, he is attacked by more and more people; for this reason also Slansky was doomed. Various persons throughout the government who may have given Slansky's name as reference are undoubtedly finding themselves in somewhat embarrassing positions.

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4. Events had followed the usual Communist pattern of first doing away with the supporters so that there would be no one left to defend the leader. Arrests started with Bruno Koehler, former chief of the CP's cadre system, and included Josef Frank, Gustav Bares, Bedrich Geminder (all Slansky's former deputies); Richard Slansky, brother of Rudolf and chief of the Press Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was arrested late in November 1951, just prior to Rudolf Slansky's arrest and Gottwald's announcement of the conspiracy. (It was inevitable that Richard Slansky should be dismissed, as he owed his position to his brother; he may have been succeeded by Jiri Melasner, "Rude Pravo" correspondent at the UN session in Paris.) Those listed above were generally regarded as Slansky's followers; not only were they his main support, they held important positions.
5. In my opinion, recent events prove that President Gottwald is, in reality, the strong man in Czechoslovakia, that he always has been, and that the West has considerably underrated his character, position, and ability to win political battles --- with Moscow's backing.

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